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THE INDUSTRIAL ART SCHOOL OF THE PENNSYLVANIA MUSEUM AT PHILADELPHIA.—I.

BY HOWARD FREMONT STRATTON, DIRECTOR OF THE ART DEPARTMENT.



ILLUSTRATED WITH DRAWINGS BY STUDENTS OF THE SCHOOL.

INTRODUCTORY.

INETEEN years ago the Centennial Exhibition had not been opened, to reveal to us the abject state of our industrial arts; but the minds of some public-spirited men had been enlightened enough to foresee that this opportunity would be the greatest ever presented to obtain the best examples of the craftsmanship of all nations for our emulation and guidance; and so the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art was incorporated, three months before the un-

closing of the gates which led to that great discovery of our principal weakness as a people.

The Museum has a distinctly industrial aim, in confining its collections to objects of art industry; and the School has a distinctly industrial aim, in directing all its efforts along the line of the *application* of art to industry; and these papers are written to emphasize by specializing each department, how manifestly this idea dominates all its instruction, and how the School fulfills the purpose of its being.

What is "art"? and what does art do? Art is expression, and it transfigures material.

Our shapeless iron and clay; our heaps of cotton and wool or vegetable fibre; our crude earths and mineral colors; our sticks of wood and blocks of stone, all are given shape and transformed into meaning as well as beautiful expression by art, which is a spiritual quality communicated to the material by the hand of the maker.

In the School every one is taught to see, to think and to work. When a student enters the preparatory art class, he is exercised upon the proportions of objects, regardless of the medium in which he may be working, or the subject of his study. How to draw is the first idea to grasp, and to hold on to. How conceive the whole proportion of the single object of the group, of the light and shade. What are the essentials to immediately express the important features of a given theme?

At the start a drawing teacher is met with the tradition, strongly sustained in the minds of many, that one learns to draw ornament as ornament, one learns to draw animals as animals, and the human

figure as the human figure, and landscape as landscape; therefore the first effort here is to abolish forever this idea, and teach the fact that drawing is proportion, whether it be a man or a house, a tree or a house. The same difficulty meets us in each department, and the effort to overcome it is the same. Color is taught as color, modeling as form, and the applications made so numerous and varied that unless the student is rather stupid he must see that the problem in any medium is practically the same, regardless of subjects. The difference being the mere technical handling.

To an unusual degree the various departments of the School are related. If a student entered especially for the drawing course is found to be conscious of only two dimensions, width and height, as not unfrequently is the case, he is put under instruction in the modeling room: not to learn to model, but to learn by modeling that a third dimension—thickness—exists; and always the student returns to his work in drawing relief, with a grasp of its principles not before possible to him. It is also a fact that some minds fail to see form apart from color—just as others fail to realize it as abstract line. The students are therefore exercised in all of these early in their careers, and in all the possible applications of the knowledge they gain, to some practical end.

If, in the general course, designs are made, they are carried out, wherever possible, in the special departments. The students see all kinds of work in process. The textile worker sees mural decoration and studies from nature; and the architectural line-draughtsman sees big ornaments modeled in high relief, and they get ideas of color, of design, of style, from their neighbors, which each in his own way applies. "All things work together for good," and the students are thus better educated and strengthened for this

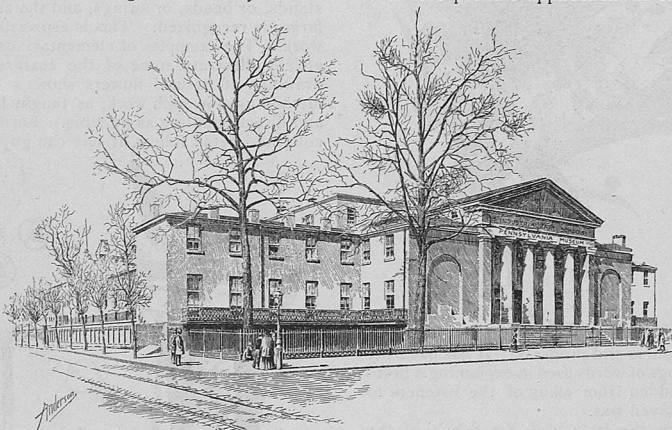
mingling.

The present organization of the School comprise the following departments:

- School of Drawing.
- " " Applied Design.
- " " Textile Design and Manufacture.
- " " Chemistry and Dyeing.
- " " Wood Carving.
- " " Decorative Painting.
- " " Mural Decoration.
- " " Decorative Sculpture.
- " " Architectural Design.
- " " Modern Languages.

In these papers such departments as more immediately relate to applied art will be described, but it cannot be amiss to mention the claims of the department of modern languages here. At this "late day" it may not be necessary to say that a knowledge of at least one language is imperative to attain success.

Yet once its importance was unrecognized. The quality of English, "as she is spoke" and



INDUSTRIAL ART SCHOOL'S BUILDING, PHILADELPHIA. DRAWN BY CARL T. ANDERSON.



SKETCH OF THE CENTRAL COURT-YARD IN THE SCHOOL OF INDUSTRIAL ART, PHILADELPHIA.

"wrote" in the schools, is not very high; and yet the direction in which many art students tend is teaching, or directing classes of workmen in a mill or industrial establishment of some sort; and a clear understanding of the words of their mother-tongue



EASTER LILIES. BY EDWIN G. LUTZ.

will surely facilitate intercourse and progress. It has been my experience that the meanings of words used in explaining a problem have been quite as hidden from many of the listeners to lectures as the process involved was.

The building occupied by the Industrial Art School of the Pennsylvania Museum is by far the most spacious of any establishment in America. It has a front of 200 ft. on Broad street and 400 ft. on Pine street, with three large court-yards, the central one of which is illustrated in this number of THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER. In these out-door studies are made of the living models and such large subjects as are unavailable or inappropriate for indoor work. The rose, the lily, the spring and autumn flowers are painted as they grow, in the open air and sunlight. The maiden who plucks them, the gardener who cultivates them, and whosoever else may fitly be connected with them, figures on the passing pictures of this unique spot.

Perhaps the best summing up of the intentions and practice of the School may be given in the words of a visitor, Mr. C. Howard Walker, who is probably the highest authority on art decoration in this country: "The greatest feature of all is that in this institution you have no fads!"

It is all serious, solid, earnest effort, along decided and practical lines.

FLOWERS AND THEIR APPLICATION TO DESIGN.



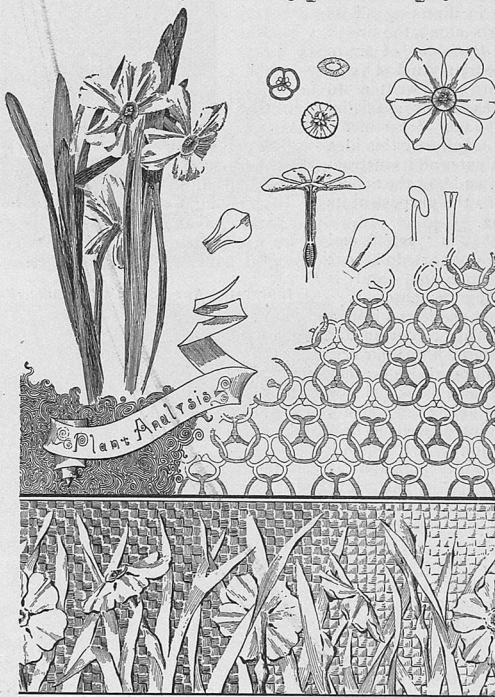
VERY flower, however well it may look in the garden or conservatory, cannot be expected to furnish a motive for applied decoration, any more than every mind can be expected to discriminate as to which class of blossoms will best lend itself to the effects we seek for in applied art. The very plant which counts for most in the drawing-room vase or lawn bed, is often least suited to purposes of design. Sometimes the size, sometimes the complicated growth, and sometimes its vague, and even grotesque form, render it unsuitable. The merely curious or unusual has no place in art. For general work the small, simple and more clearly defined

flowers are most appropriate. For certain theatrical and gorgeous effects, flowers such as the peony and tropical plants are used with very stunning results; but to learn to discriminate is an essential part of the designer's education, and to cultivate this the students here are exercised in making "plant analyses," for the purpose of obtaining suggestions from the natural form for conventional rendering.

The growth which lends itself to outline tracery is one thing, that which is best expressed in masses of light and shade is another; and the wise and experienced worker will not try to wrest either from its proper place, but draw the first and model the last.

In the beginning, flowers were probably used wholly with regard to some significance which had become attached to them—as the lily for purity, the rose for queenliness, the poppy for sleep, the palm for victory; but in these days comparatively little thought is given to this, except in church embroideries, where symbolism still obtains.

It is curious to note how differently the same flower will be interpreted by those who analyze it, whether individuals or nations. To one, its plan or construction will be foremost. Another sees, not so much the character of its growth, as how it stands, or bends, or swings, and the action of it more than the flower is recognized. This is especially noticeable in Japanese work. The examples of elementary design published with this article illustrate some of the features, and the pen-and-ink drawings of natural flowers show a distinctive trait of the method used in such work, as taught here—as great simplicity and direct handling as possible. Form and quality come first, color and detail follow, if one can go so far. To express the



PLANT ANALYSIS. BY FRED. B. KIMBALL.

wax-like texture of the lily; the soft, fluffy down of the milk-weed; the frailty and looseness of the rose petals—these are the immediate intentions of the student.

DECORATIVE NOTE.

IN an Indian smoking-room, Indian ornament is displayed, carved on the baseboard, but appears more conspicuously in the end of the room where the fireplace and a window make corresponding panels. Each is distinguished by two indented arches, on the spandrels of which is ornament in low relief. The character of the room is further carried out in the color of the wall, divans and hangings.